WASHINGTON, D.C., JANUARY 30, 2024 — Today, the White House and U.S. Department of Education officially announced that institutions will not receive FAFSA applicant information until "the first half of March," further delaying an already sluggish process. Normally, the FAFSA is available on October 1, with institutions receiving FAFSA applicant information shortly thereafter.

This year, operational difficulties associated with a congressionally mandated overhaul have already delayed the FAFSA by several months. The FAFSA soft launch has been challenging, and institutions were previously notified they would receive FAFSA applicant information by the end of January, slowing the delivery of financial aid offers to some students. Now, with that date moved to March, delays will continue to plague the financial aid cycle in an already challenging year.

In response to this news, NASFAA President Justin Draeger issued the following statement:

"On the very day that schools were expecting FAFSA applicant information, they were instead notified by the U.S. Department of Education that they shouldn't expect to receive that data until March, at the earliest. These continued delays, communicated at the last minute, threaten to harm the very students and families that federal student aid is intended to help.

Complicating the financial aid application process even further, the online FAFSA is still today unavailable to entire swaths of students who are unable to log in or complete it. These include eligible students in special family circumstances, as well as students who make simple mistakes on the form and who cannot log back in to correct them and submit.

With this last-minute news, our nation's colleges are once again left scrambling as they determine how best to work within these new timelines to issue aid offers as
soon as possible — so the students who can least afford higher education aren't the ones who ultimately pay the price for these missteps."

NASFAA policy experts are available to speak to members of the media about today's announcement. To set up an interview, please email NASFAA Director of Communications Allie Arcese or call (202) 785-6954.

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About NASFAA

The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) is a nonprofit membership organization that represents more than 29,000 financial aid professionals at approximately 3,000 colleges, universities, and career schools across the country. NASFAA member institutions serve nine out of every 10 undergraduates in the U.S. Based in Washington, D.C., NASFAA is the only national association with a primary focus on student aid legislation, regulatory analysis, and training for financial aid administrators.

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